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Celebrating Yonkers Blessings

News From Chuck Lesnick

April 18, 2008

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Papal Visit



I was honored to be among those who welcomed Pope Benedict XVI to New York this past weekend. My chance came on Friday afternoon at the Park East Synagogue in Manhattan. His visit there held great

meaning for the Jewish community in that only twice in the long history of the Church has a pope visited a Jewish House of Worship. Pope Benedict XVI visited the Cologne Synagogue on April 19, 2005 and Pope John Paul II visited the Rome Synagogue on April 13, 1986.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, a Holocaust survivor, made reference to his wartime experiences and also the Pope's. He also discussed the past forty-five years of improved Catholic-Jewish relations. It was an historically momentous occasion both for me, personally, and for humanity as the Pope reaffirmed his commitment to inter-religious dialogue and outreach to the Jewish community.

The Pope's visit to St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers was a moment in our history that will remain with us always. It was a great honor to have this world leader in our wonderful city.

Counting Our Earth's Blessings, April 20-27

We kicked-off Yonkers Green Week on Friday with a day-long Environmental Celebration at Riverside High School of Engineering and Design.

The City Council, after forming its Green



Policy Task Force last year, declared the week of Earth Day and Arbor Day as Green Week--Yonkers first environmental awareness event from April 20-27.

Students at Riverside High School teamed up with organizers from the City Council's Green Policy Task Force to help make Green Week a success. They held their own "in-house" event at which 25 of their environmental public service announcements were screened (and will soon be aired on Channel 78) and their winning posters from a "Ways to Be Green" competition were on display. They also participated in vine cutting and a planting activity with city leaders. Additionally, the New York Power Authority had an alternative fuel vehicle on display to further educate students on hybrid and "clean energy" technologies.

The Task Force and Riverside students were also joined by members of the Yonkers Board of Education, including Superintendent Bernard Pierorazio.

Click [here](#) to see a complete schedule of Green Week events or call Samantha Wapnick at 377-6060.

Blessing of the Hudson River



Join religious leaders and environmental organizations on Tuesday, April 22 at 7 a.m. as they "bless back" the river that has blessed us for so long in honor of Earth Day during Yonkers Green Week.

The ceremony will be held at the Beczak Environmental Education Center, 35 Alexander St., Yonkers.

This is just one of dozens of Green Week events being held throughout the city from April 20-27. The week will feature everything from a city-wide environmental film series, energy saving workshops for homeowners and hands on educational activities for the whole family--to special admission deals to the Hudson River Museum and the New York Water Taxi to educate residents about preserving and sustaining our natural environment.

Again, click [here](#) for a complete listing of Green Week events.

The "Blessing" of Our Children

As we discussed last week, the City Council is poised to vote to explore buying a warehouse next to the PEARLS Hawthorne School for an expanded playground and ballfield.

The Mayor along with County Legislators Jose Alvarado and Ken Jenkins and Council Majority Leader Sandy Annabi and I have asked the County Executive Andy Spano to consider using Westchester County Legacy money for the acquisition of this additional parkland.



If successful, the 900-student population of pre-K thru 8th graders, in addition to

neighbors and children from a nearby school, would have room to run and play organized sports. As it is, PEARLS students use a small asphalt area during recess.

Members of the City Council need to approve a resolution authorizing Mayor Amicone to negotiate a purchase price for the warehouse land, but questions about the resolution's language and the city's impending budget crisis (more about this in a future e-blast) postponed the vote even though most of the money spent would be from the County, not the City. Please sign up with the City Clerk, before 3:00 pm on Tuesday to speak at the April 22nd Committee of the Whole Meeting in support of parkland for our children. To sign up, call 914-377-6020 or email cityclerk@yonkersny.gov.

For more information, click [here](#).

The "Blessing" of Our Past



This month, our Real Estate Committee deliberated until midnight on the merits of the Landmarks Board's recommendation to landmark the Philipse Manor Historic District that would include property that Greyston owns and wants to raze for workforce housing. We met again this past week and it appears now that Greyston will work cooperatively with the City's Landmark's Board to develop a project that will be economically feasible and will adaptively reuse the existing buildings.

The Council will discuss this once again on April 22 when they are likely to vote to landmark the Historic District. Please sign up before 3:00 pm on Tuesday to speak at the April 22nd Committee of the Whole. To sign up, call 914-377-6020 or email cityclerk@yonkersny.gov.

For those who celebrate Passover, my wife Beth and my daughters Emily and Ariel join me in wishing you and your family a joyous Pesach.

email: chuck.lesnick@yonkersny.gov

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